

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Jor Bagh Road Aliganj
New Delhi-110003
Dated: 15th February, 2023

To,

Principal Secretary (Forests),
Government of Odisha
Bhubaneswar.

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in favour of Department of Water Resources Govt. of Odisha for non-forestry use of 139.319 (originally proposed area 159.895 ha) of forest land for construction of Chheligada Medium Irrigation project in R. Udayagiri Block of Gajapati district of Odisha.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Odisha's letter no. 764/9F (Irrig.)-207/04 dated 12.01.2023 submitting the additional information in respect of the Ministry's letter dated 24.11.2022. In this regard, following shortcomings have been observed based upon the Site inspection report of IRO Bhubneshwar and the information submitted by the State Government:

- i. The State Government earlier reported that there is no violation of Forest(Conservation) Act, 1980 in the proposal, whereas, the IRO Bhubneshwar vide SIR letter dated 10.01.2023 (**copy enclosed**) has reported that violation of the FC Act, has been noticed in the form of Bridge, road and excavation area.
- ii. The IRO Bhubneshwar has also reported that settlements were found in the areas proposed for Compensatory Afforestation in Debra and Jhadrandiba. It was also observed that there are signs of shifting cultivation in the identified CA site and there is a non-metalled road passing through the CA area. Keeping this in view the areas proposed for Compensatory Afforestation are not free from encumbrances. The State Govt. therefore has to provide CA areas free from all encumbrances.
- iii. The justification submitted by the State Govt for the reduction in the area due to DGPS survey has discrepancies e.g. in case of Sindhiva Village, 4 plots having an area of 32.666 ha. have now been deleted with remarks like *Not considered(Parbata Kissam as per ROR)*. Similar variation has been observed in other villages as well. At the same time a new plot having forest area of 3.189 ha has been newly added in Village Sindhiva. Further there are other villages where no forest land was involved earlier and in the revised list

now forest land has been added. Moreover, it has been mentioned that there is no change in the Non-forest area. Keeping this in view the justification that the reduction in area is due to DGPS Survey does not seem to be convincing.

In view of the above, State Government is requested to submit the detailed report/documents/clarification as above for further consideration of this proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Encl: As above

Sd/-

(Suneet Bhardwaj)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. PCCF (HoFF), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
2. APCCF cum Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
3. DDGF (C), MoEF&CC's IRO Bhubaneswar
4. User Agency
5. Monitoring Cell of FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.